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In Memoriam

James Garfield.

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In Memoriam.

JAMES A. GARFIELD.



To Mrs. A. A. Pitkin.
With the author's Compliment

James Abram Garfield.

SONNETS OF SENSATION AND EVENT.

BY JOHN SAVARY.

- I. GRADUATED.—Williams College, 1856.
II. LAUREATED.—Chickamauga, September 20, 1863.
III. NOMINATED.—Chicago, June 8, 1880.
IV. ELECTED.—November 2, 1880.
V. FELICITATED.—November 4, 1880.
VI. INAUGURATED.—March 4, 1881.
VII. ASSASSINATED.—July 2, 1881.
VIII. COMPASSIONATED.
IX. RECUPERATED.
X. RELAPSED.
XI. RECOVERED.
XII. CONGRATULATED.

AFTER THE TRAGEDY OF JULY 2D.

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I.

Graduated.

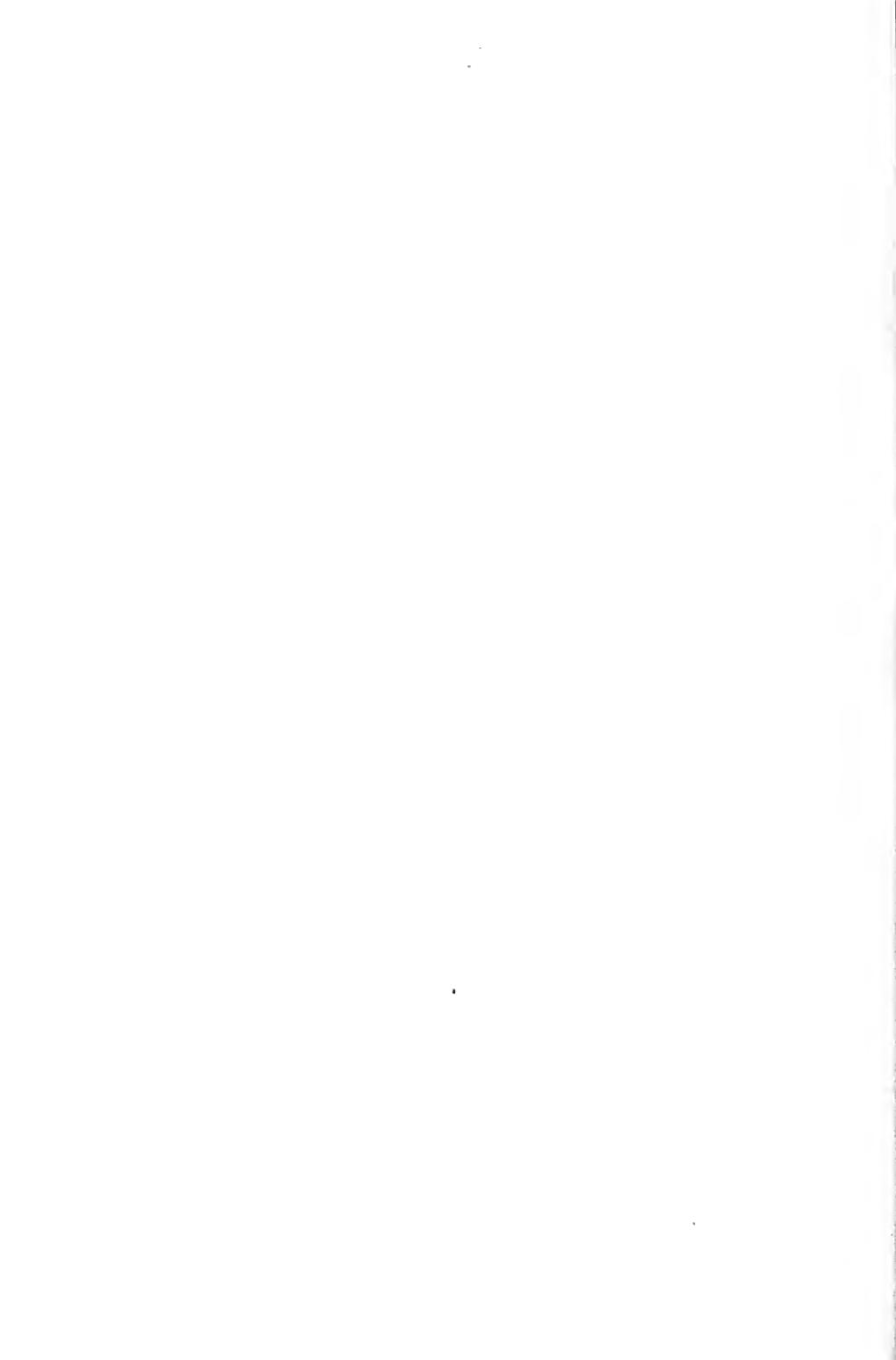
WHEN you recall the faces you have met
At school or college, be it royal George,
Or James, or Charles who is remembered, storje,
Or something like it in your bosom yet
Stirs for a moment as the mind is set.

You struck good blows in earnest at the forge
Of learning stationed in that mountain gorge
Spanned by the rainbow of a mild regret !
I saw you then a great, good-natured boy,
But scarcely dreamed of empire in your brain.
Yet you bear rule, and dignities, a train ;
And Alma Mater with exceeding joy
Was there to greet you—but the horror drops
A day of mourning on her mountain tops.

II.

Laureated.

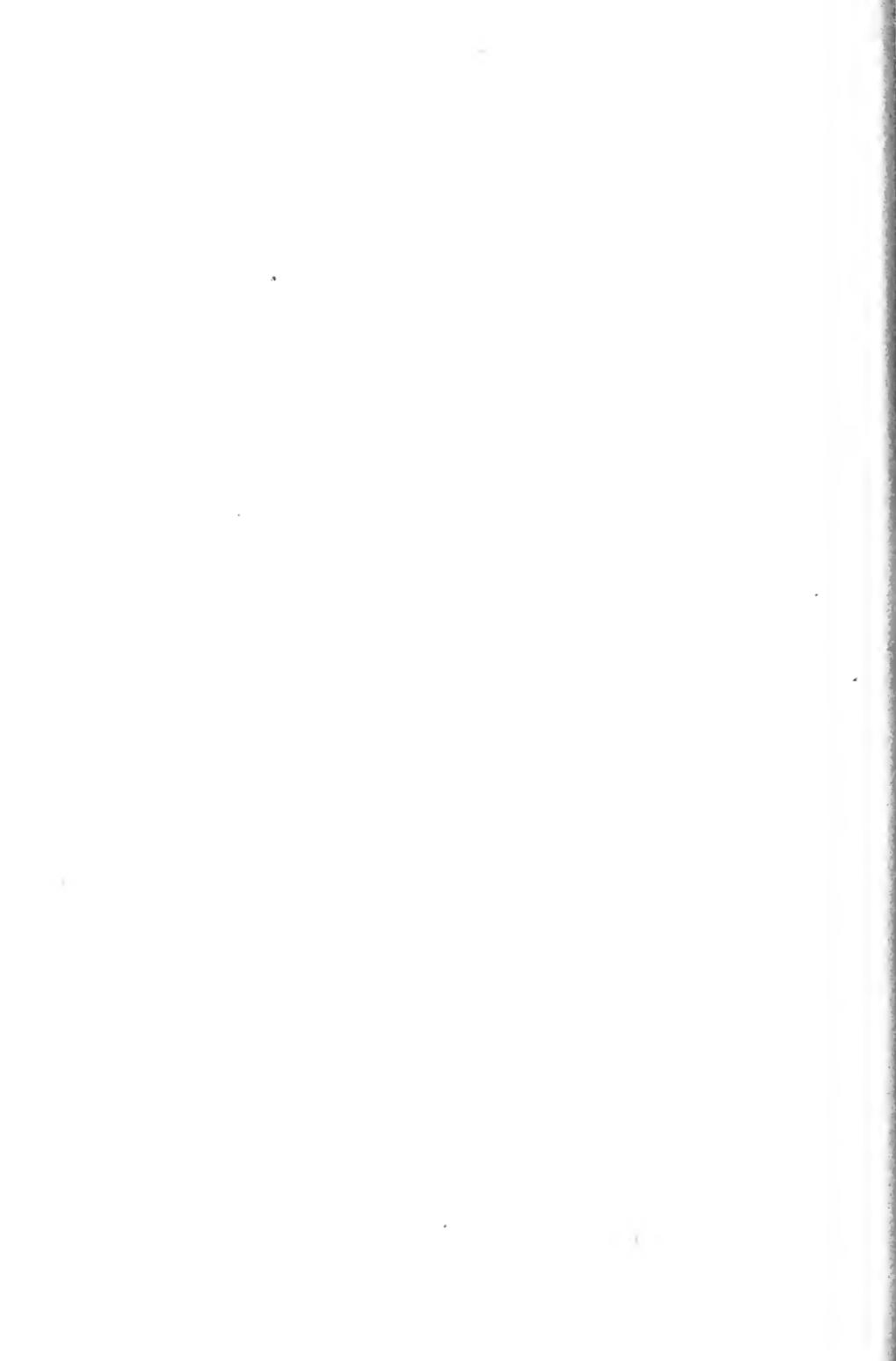
BAPTISED in spirit, and also in fire,
Must that man be, a leader of the flock,
Born for affairs, and come of noble stock,
Innately noble like your great grandsire
At Concord Bridge, who helped the foe retire.
Spring from such loins, of course, you stood the
shock
Of battle firm as Chickamauga's Rock,¹
And heard God speak out of the whirlwind nigher.
“ DULCE ET DECORUM,”—you learned how great
The idea of country, and the laureled meed.
And there, I think, you got your doctorate,
Your letters patent, worth's true title-deed,
With war's red seal upon't, and stamped by fate :
Ah, of what glorious fruit was this the seed !



III.

Nominated.

SUPERIOR virtue goes among the crowd
Unseen at all times, but yet not unknown ;
For in a thousand ways is virtue shown.
With vital force and energy endowed,
It draws all hearts and minds, as draws the cloud
From earth to heaven the bosomed lightnings
 flown,
Till by some Power to full effulgence blown,
The godlike man steps from his golden shroud.
From depths of poverty and prenatal gloom
 The hero comes to providential view.
 The shouting thousands at Chicago knew
Garfield² was for-the-field, and when the “boom”
 Started, all went—the eagle³ flew, and he
 Perched on his pole like winged Victory.



IV.

Elected.

In equal strength arrayed, when two great powers
On battle eve give challenge and reply,
With name for name appealed unto the sky,
Victorious counted by the telling Hours,
Which shall be foremost in this land of ours ?

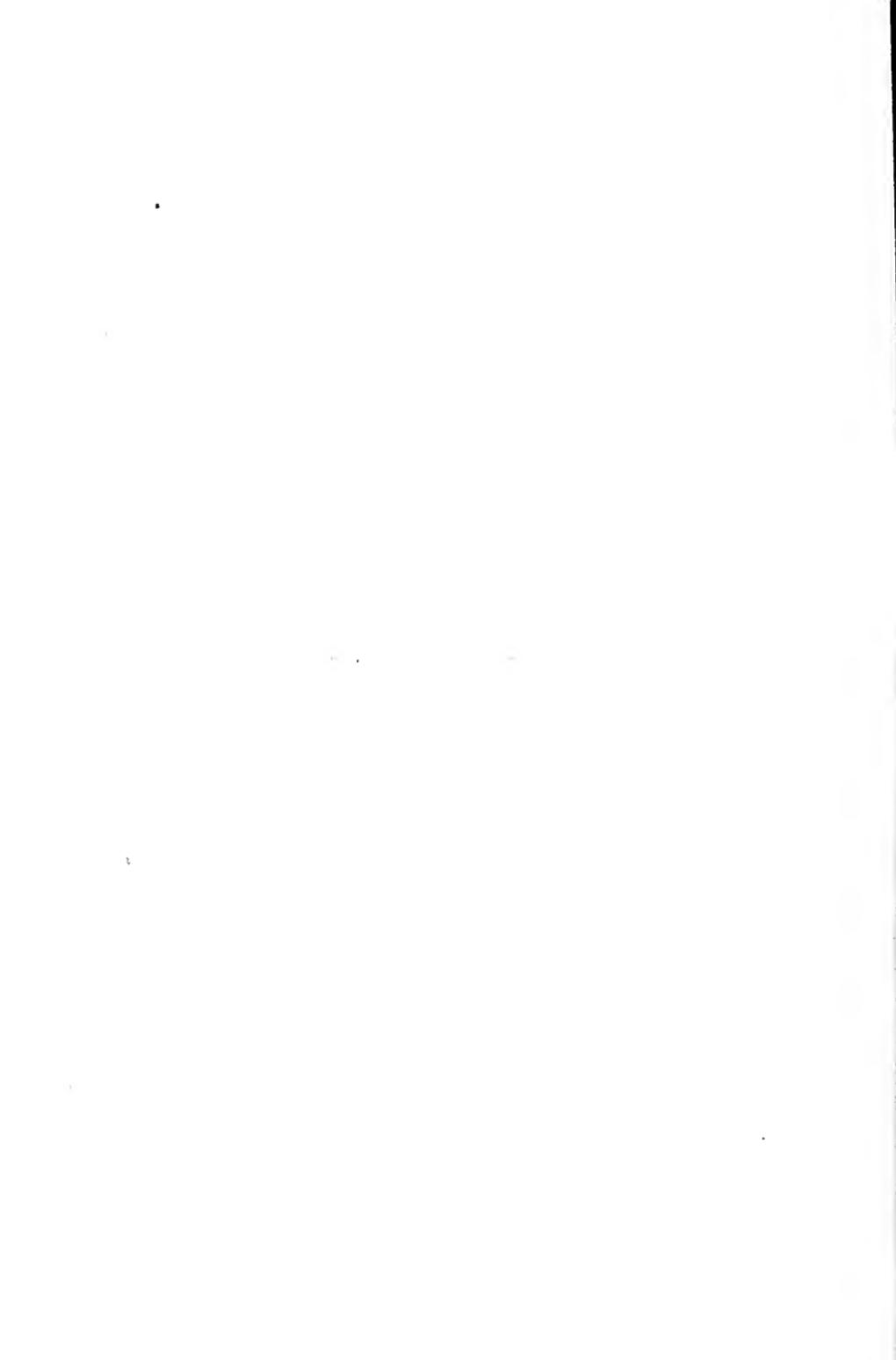
Answer, O People, with decisive cry
To Chance, the game's up ! cease to spin the die
Doubtful, dispelling the dark cloud that lowers !
The torch lights pale, but yet the welkin rings
Far round the hills, and to the distant coasts.
A tower of strength is Garfield's name which brings
The thunder of the shoutings of the hosts.
But now the banners of the chiefs advance,
God send the country safe deliverance !



V.

Felicitated.

WHEN to the summit thou shalt come elect
By strenuous toil, and by the golden dower
Of hearts and hopes to blossom in an hour
Of happy fortune, standing there erect
Before the altar sworn with due respect
To consecrate your life's best fruit and flower,
Remember that the top of human power
In prospect green, is bald in retrospect.
And therefore think that when these sugar-hearts
That lick thee now, shall melt and fall away,
Unless thou bear a touchstone in thy mind,
Thou shalt become a prey to subtle arts,
And find not friends, but flatterers who betray
Thy soul to bondage, like a Samson blind.



VI.

Inaugurated.

WHY doth the sun with so presageful glare
This wild march weather, as in sorrow drowned,
Look pale with grief to see your wishes crowned ?
I draw this omen from the cloudy chair
Of Phœbus borne to a serener air :
The course of your administration sound,
Stormy at first, shall in the end be found
Like ⁴ Freia's day, the golden, prosperous fair.
It is the season of good wishes now ;
Then welcome in the name of all the people !
The while they bind this laurel on your brow,
The cannon speaks, and joy-bells rock the steeple.
Your sails are set ; and fair before the wind,
Your course is clear, the future undefined.



VII.

Assassinated.

WAS it for this, dear friend, that you had won
By toilsome steps your way to place and power?
For this you climbed above the clouds that lower
With lurid tempest in the rising sun
Of lawful sway, and wide dominion ?
And when you stood at the consummate flower
Of all your greatness, in an evil hour,
The shot was fired, the awful deed was done !
Esteem thou hadst before, O steadfast soul,
But now thou hast thy people's love in fee.
Cold love is kindled to a burning coal
In living heat of loyalty to thee.
And if the People's prayer to God on high
Can aught avail, dear friend, you shall not die.



VIII.

Compassionated.

O, what a week of fluctuant hopes and fears !
A week, indeed, of “onsets of despair !”
A Nation bowed stands in the wailing air
Of windy sighs thick blown with rainy tears,
Rumor, and prophecy on the lips of seers.
His guardian angel with a brow of care,
And breasts of sorrow leaning o'er him there
Gathers, like Winkelried, death's sheaf of spears !
Hush ! he has fallen into slumber deep.
Yet his lips move like a dark mountain stream
Where his mind wanders in the world of dream
That babbles softly out of childhood's sleep.
“ We are such stuff as dreams are made of,” said
The sick man when he woke refreshed in bed.



IX.

Recuperated.

How hard, in health, to be struck down and lie
All weary days and nights on bed of pain !
Harder for him of the large, active brain,
And social nature ; yet, with quiet eye
Turned on the pleasant landscape and the sky,
He hath medicinal aid, and not in vain,
From singing leaves and splash of silver rain,
Soothed by low winds and waters' lullaby.
Around his bed good angels watch and wait.
And many a king and many a potentate
Sends kindly message from beyond the sea.
And his own People will not let him be
Out of their arms of love, O God ! how deep—
The blood-red poppy of the world of sleep !



X.

Relapsed.

WHEN to the orb of glory and of light
Comes on the dark, and touches with its lips
The body of brightness dimming as it dips
Behind the planet's artificial night,
The boding world in wonder at the sight,
Watches the shadow as it moves and slips
Over the land and sea and sailing ships,
In mute misgiving of each moment's flight.
So strange to our perplexed intelligence,
Appeared at zenith-point to fade and fail
The light of that recovered star through veil
Of anxious hope and fear in dim suspense !
We saw his orb from which the dark wave slips,
Notched in gray shadow of the great eclipse.



XI.

Recovered.

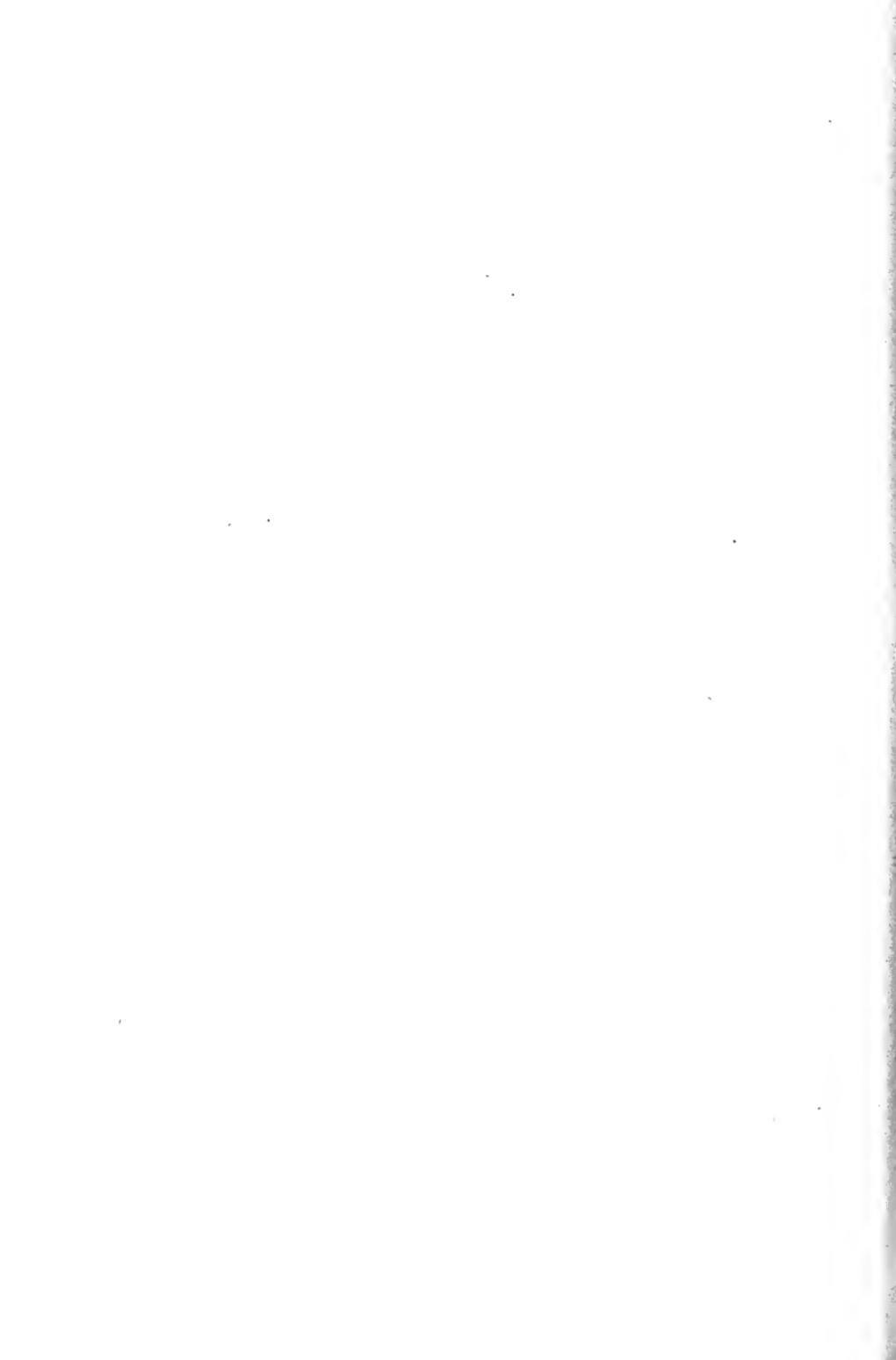
EASY and gradual are the steps that lead
Downward to death and steep Tartarean night :
But winning upward to the realms of light,
Is toilsome, hard, and difficult indeed.
Well knows he this, who, versed in Virgil's rede,
Towards recovery sets his staff aright,
And gathering strength⁵ goes on to make the fight,
Like gaining tides that inch by inch succeed !
O lofty hope and energy of will !
O living spirit of the lord of breath !
Hark to the People's million-throated roll
Of thunderous welcome to their hero ill
Who " takes the chance," and giving odds to Death,
Beats the lean fellow racing to the goal !

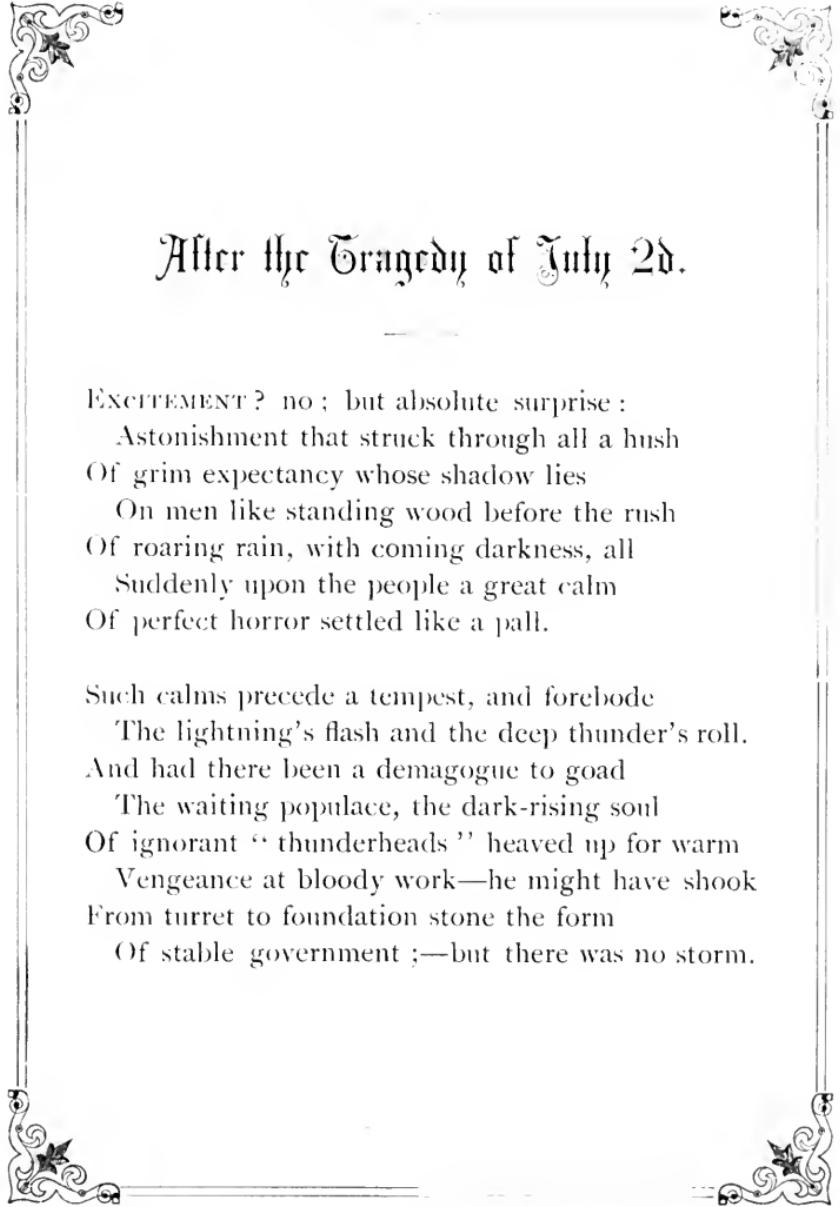


XII.

Congratulated.

How many and how great concerns of state
Lie at the mercy of the meanest things !
This man the peer of presidents and kings,
Nay, first among them, passed through danger's gate
In war unseathed, and perils out of date.
To meet a fool whose pistol-shot yet rings
Around the world, and at mere greatness flings
The cruel sneer of destiny or fate !
Yet hath he made the fool fanatic foil
To valor, patience, nobleness, and wit !
Nor had the world known but because of it
What virtues grow in suffering's sacred soil.
The shot which opened like a crack of hell,
Made all hearts stream with sacred pity's well,
And showed that unity in which we dwell.





After the Tragedy of July 2d.

EXCITEMENT? no; but absolute surprise:

Astonishment that struck through all a hush
Of grim expectancy whose shadow lies

On men like standing wood before the rush
Of roaring rain, with coming darkness, all

Suddenly upon the people a great calm
Of perfect horror settled like a pall.

Such calms precede a tempest, and forebode

The lightning's flash and the deep thunder's roll.
And had there been a demagogue to goad

The waiting populace, the dark-rising soul
Of ignorant "thunderheads" heaved up for warm
Vengeance at bloody work—he might have shook
From turret to foundation stone the form

Of stable government ;—but there was no storm.





Notes.

¹ A sobriquet for "Old Pap Thomas."

² The Rev. E. N. Manley, a classmate of General Garfield wrote, "I think it was at the breaking-up meeting of the class, at graduation, that being called up for a speech, he said "*γαρ* is a greek particle meaning *for*. Gar-field, for-the-field, that is what I suppose I am."

³ It was reported in the papers at the time, and generally believed, that an eagle alighted on the ridge-pole of General Garfield's house in Washington, just about the time his nomination was made known.

⁴ Friday, or Freia's day, is from Freyja, the Northern Venus.

⁵ See motto on title page.

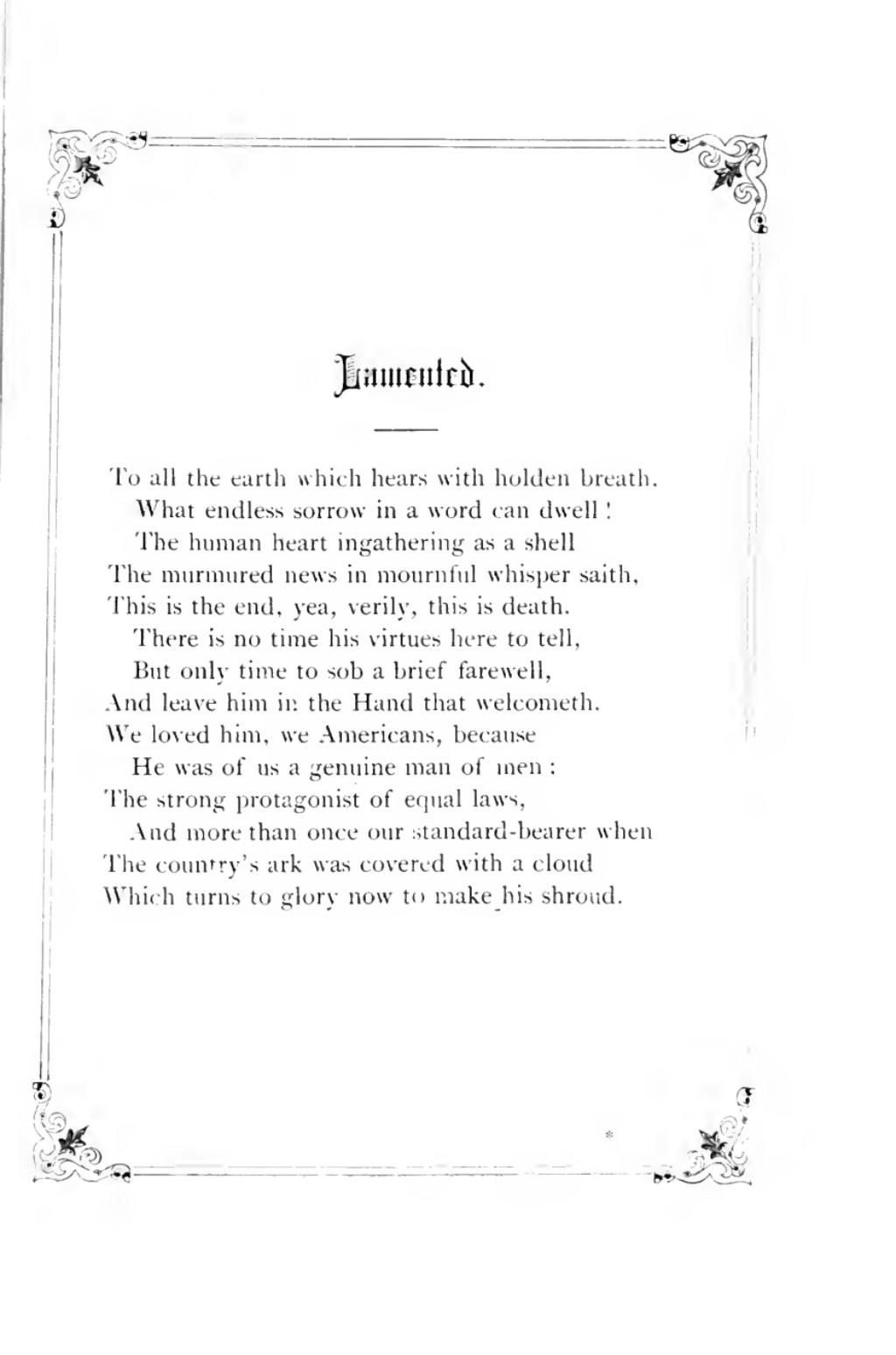




Notice.

This brochure, all but the close, was in print some weeks ago, and while there was yet a firm hope of the President's recovery. But "man proposes, God disposes." Hence, to those sonnets written in the light of hope, and put forth on the assurance of recovery, are added these of commemoration, written under the cypress, and closing with the inevitable VALE.

SEPTEMBER 20, 1881.



Lamented.

To all the earth which hears with holden breath,

What endless sorrow in a word can dwell !

The human heart ingathering as a shell

The murmured news in mournful whisper saith,

This is the end, yea, verily, this is death.

There is no time his virtues here to tell,

But only time to sob a brief farewell,

And leave him in the Hand that welcometh.

We loved him, we Americans, because

He was of us a genuine man of men :

The strong protagonist of equal laws,

And more than once our standard-bearer when

The country's ark was covered with a cloud

Which turns to glory now to make his shroud.



Commemorated.

Build him no monument of lasting date,
Enduring brass or marble, but record
That when he passed from earth to his reward,
His people still the bread of sorrow ate,
And all the land in tears was desolate !

How the red hand of murder most abhorred
Wrote large his name and virtues in the Lord,
Sublime in sufferance, and serenely great !
He o'er himself was natural priest and king.
A royal soul which budded on the stem
Of simple manhood wore the diadem
Of love and reverence due—no other thing.
His large good nature, love, and life and health,
Will perish never from the commonwealth.





Vult.

Fallen is the first and chief:
Oh ! but our hearts are full of grief.
Bowed in silence, stand and wait
Where he lies in lofty state.
Who hath any words to say ?
Grief is eloquent to-day.
On the door-knob put no crape,
But your hearts in mourning drape.
Death lifts up the portal bar,
Droop the flag and dress the car.
Slowly move in sad array,
Bring him on his last long way.
The veiled cities see him pass,
Bow their heads and cry alas !
Useless, useless, toll no bell,
He is better—in fact, well.
Healed of all his hurts and scars,
Honorable discharged from wars.
He is sleeping, ~~not~~ you see ;
Wake him not ! Oh, let him be :





~~Never a child grieved him,~~
~~Sleeping on his mother's breast.~~
His part is played, his life is done,
His fight is fought, and rest is won.
States and cities leave to show,
All the pageantries of woe.
As the Nation's honored chief,
Bury him with public grief.
Ah, but there is grief more deep,
There are wounds no balm can steep.
(Can one wretched life atone
For this wrong to Nature done?)
Words that cut like a sharp knife,
Farewell, mother ; farewell, wife !
Frozen tears give no relief,
You shall live in marble grief.
In our annals, such another
Son and husband, wife, and mother
Grouped together, time ne'er saw :
And the world that looks with awe
On you looking up to God,
Kneeling there upon the sod,
Hears a voice from Heaven, "well done :"
"Enter, my beloved son.
Be at peace, and shine afar,
And I will give him the Morning Star."



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